

BODIES strewn around Jim Jones' "throne."

Madness and Death In Guyana

Compiled From News Services

GEORGETOWN, Guyana — They killed the babies first.

Mothers brought their infants to the altar of death. Children were led by the hand. Nurses moved from one child to another, squirting cyanide down their throats with syringes.

The adults followed; some embraced death willingly, others were murdered.

The Rev. Jim Jones, leader of the Peoples Temple, presided calmly over the carefully rehearsed suicide rite, exhorting his followers to their death.

Such is the scene on Nov. 18 at Jonestown, Guyana, as described in sparse eyewitness accounts. But it is unlikely that the world will ever learn exactly what happened that day in the orgy of death at the jungle commune.

This much is known:

U.S. Rep. Leo J. Ryan, D-Calif., three newsmen, and a temple defector were killed in an ambush as they were leaving Jonestown after conducting an investigation of conditions there. The slayings then set off the chain of suicides and killings among Jones' followers.

Initial reports of the number killed were revised upward daily, and eventually 913 bodies were flown to a military mortuary in Dover, Del.

A coroner's jury in Guyana ruled Dec. 22 that all but three of the deaths were murders, but this is disputed by some police authorities who believe that hundreds died willingly.

An autopsy performed at Dover on Jones' body showed that he had died of gunshot wounds of the head, but the report was inconclusive as to whether the cult leader committed suicide or was slain.

Investigators arriving at Jonestown found a scene of horror. Around the Peoples Temple, a ramshackle wooden structure, the ground was covered with the dead, many lying in embrace, many on top of one another.

Among the few who escaped the carnage were lawyers Mark Lane and Charles Garry, who had performed legal work for the temple.

The long, tortuous path to the bloody jungle killings in Guyana began years earlier in Lynn, Ind., a small industrial backwater, where James Warren Jones was born in 1932. He was 19 years old when he first mounted a pulpit and it was in 1956 that he opened his first Peoples Temple in Indianapolis. He adopted a liberal stance on racial relations and was named executive director of Indianapolis' Human Rights Commission in 1961.

In 1965, he moved about 70 families of his temple to Redwood Valley near Ukiah in northern California, where he became a respectable community leader.

In 1971, Jones bought a church in San Francisco and later another church in Los Angeles. Along the way his brand of social and political revivalism caught the attention of California's liberal and radical political leaders. In 1976, he was appointed to the San Francisco Housing Authority and eventually became its chairman.

He was able to deliver a large bloc of votes, usually for liberal causes.

Visitors to his temple included Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr., former San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. Letters praising his work came from Rosa-



The Rev. Jim Jones

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lynn Carter and the late Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey.

As his political power grew, so did the wealth of his church, which was collected in a variety of business enterprises and through levies of 25 to 40 percent of members' gross incomes.

Jones generally received favorable press coverage, and it was only after the Jonestown killings that the darker side of his past emerged.

Former members told of his para-

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posed him. They described hours-long
sermons in which Jones harangued them
on sex. There were demands that, as a
sign of loyalty, members must confess
to sexual misdeeds, for which they were
beaten. Jones was said to be a bisexual,
and there were reports that he had
forced both male and female members
of the Temple to have sexual relations
with him.

Peoples Temple became a bizarre
cult, with its members held in line
through terror and brainwashing.

In late 1977, Jones went ahead with a
longtime plan to move his temple to the
jungle clearing in Guyana that became
known as Jonestown. There, the reports
of oppression continued. Members had
difficulty communicating with their
families, and Jones took stern measures
to keep his followers from leaving.

The State Department was asked to
look into the situation, but reported it
could find no basis for action. Relatives
of church members at last prevailed on
Rep. Ryan to investigate, and it was his
visit in November, accompanied by a
group of newsmen, that precipitated the
violent end of the temple.

After Jones' death, authorities esti-
mated the cult's assets at up to \$15 mil-
lion, with most of it believed to be in
Swiss or Panamanian banks. Letters
were found bequeathing \$7 million to the
Soviet Communist Party.

Only one person has been charged in
the death of Rep. Ryan. After a three-
week hearing, a Guyanese magistrate
ordered Larry Layton, 32, a temple
member, to stand trial for murder. The
trial is expected to begin in February.

The Guyana government has also

arrested Stephan Jones, the son of Jim
Jones, in connection with the deaths of
Sharon Amos, the public relations head
of the cult, and of her three children. All
four were found with their throats
slashed in a cult house in Georgetown on
Nov. 18. Also charge in these deaths is
Charles E. Beikman, 43, another cult
member.

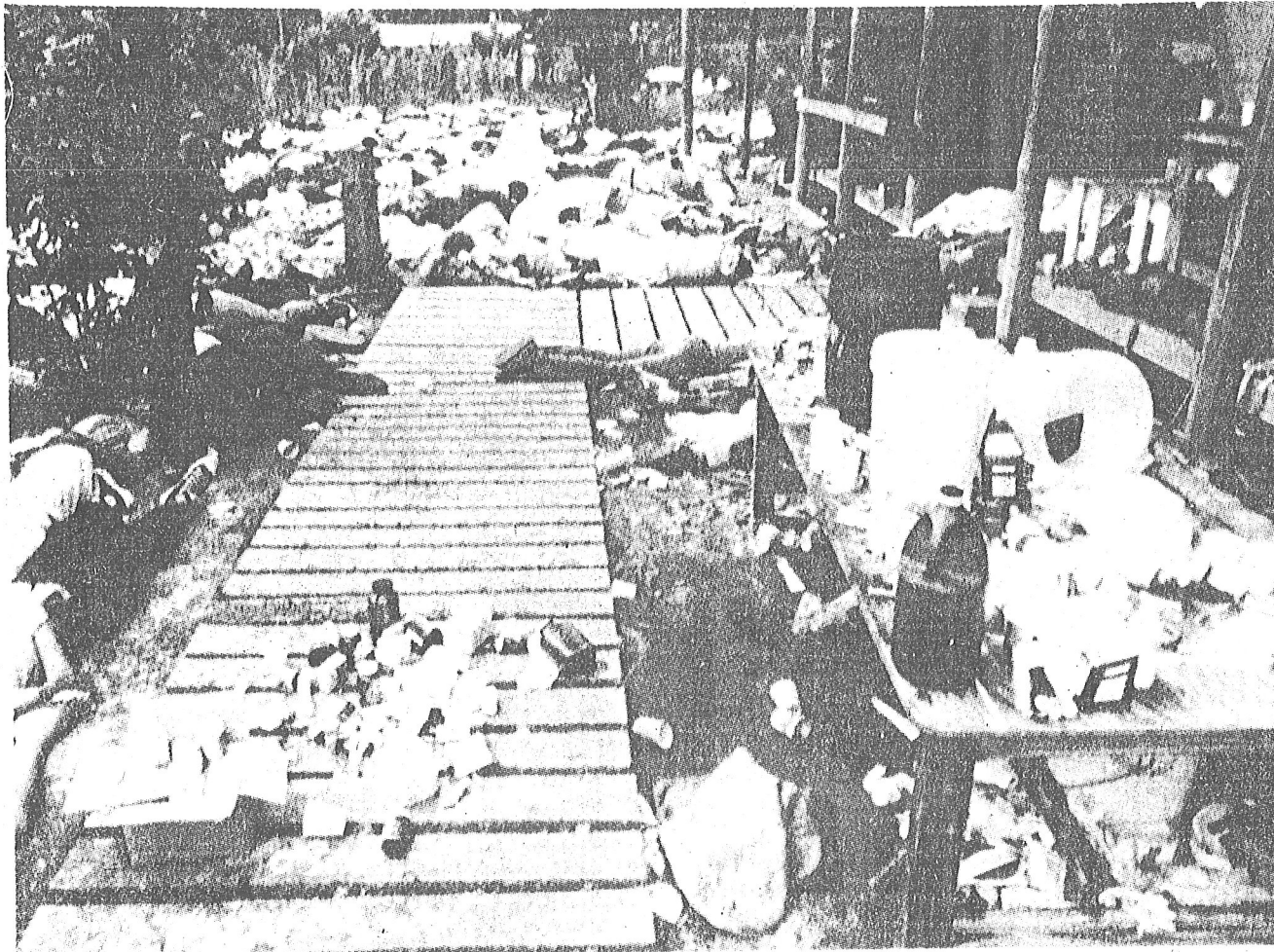
In San Francisco, meanwhile, a fed-
eral grand jury is investigating the cult
to determine whether there was a con-
spiracy that extended beyond Jonestown
in the killing of Rep. Ryan. It is also
looking into possible violations of federal
gun, drug and currency laws by tem-
ple members.

The chief witness is Terri Buford, a
former top aide to Jones. Mark Lane,
her attorney, said she was telling every-
thing she knows about crimes commit-
ted, including reports about a "hit list"
— persons to be killed after the Guyana
massacre. To date, however, no such
killings are known to have taken place.

In Dover, Del. — eight weeks after
the suicide-killings — the job of identi-
fying the bodies of the Jonestown victims
continues. Last week, authorities said
631 unclaimed bodies remained there,
with 353 still not identified.

The body of Jim Jones was cremated
Dec. 19 in a small crematory in Clarks-
boro, N.J.

news in review/world



SCENE OF HORROR: Syringes and paper cups (foreground) used in the mass suicides. (UPI)Telephotos